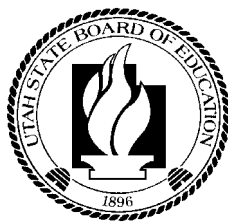


**The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Kearns Junior High School
4040 West 5305 South
Kearns, Utah 84118**

April 22-23, 2004



Utah State Office of Education
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P.O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

**THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**Kearns Junior High School
4040 West 5305 South
Kearns, Utah 84118**

April 22-23, 2004

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

**Patrick Ogden
Interim State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

**DIVISION OF
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Salt Lake City, Utah

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FOREWORD

A major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate inservice growth and school improvement. Consequently, requirements include not only meeting the standards of the Utah State Office of Education, but also completing a school evaluation every six years.

School evaluation is that effort by the local school staff to take a comprehensive look at the school's program, operation, and effect. The school determines how closely its purposes and philosophy coincide with its actual practices and the degree to which its stated objectives are being reached. It is a three-phased program: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, April 22-23, 2004, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to meet the requirements referred to above.

The entire staff of Kearns Junior High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Robert Averett is commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for the generally fine program being provided for Kearns Junior High School students, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more adequately meet the needs of the students of Kearns Junior High School.

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Interim State Superintendent
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**Board of Regents Appointments*

10/30/03

GRANITE SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Kevin D. Hague	Assistant Superintendent, Support Services
Linda Mariotti	Assistant Superintendent, Instructional Services
Dr. Paul S. Sagers, Jr.	Assistant Superintendent, Program Services
David F. Garrett	Business Administrator/Treasurer

KEARNS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Rob Averett.....Principal
Mark Johnson.....Assistant Principal
Jim Rice.....Assistant Principal

Counseling

Tina Ploch.....Counselor
Karen Gundersen.....Counselor
Jessen Schility.....Counselor

Support Staff

Lynda Weiner.....Principal Secretary
Laura Bradley.....Financial Secretary
Dixie Swiatocha.....Counseling Center Secretary
Kathy Littlewood.....Comprehensive Guidance Secretary
Shauna Ball.....Lunch/Attendance Secretary

Faculty

Ruth Ann Bateman	Scott Henrie	Kathleen Perkins
Tony Boggess	Kim Heppler	Yevgeny Pevzner
Richard Bruin	Molle Hess	Brica Pulispher
Pam Carson	Phaedra Johnson	Shirley Raiford
Karen Carter	Dale Kerr	Kyle Reece
Erin Coogan	Shirley Lems	Melanie Rees
Jerry Croasmun	Mercy Lynne	Valerie Reynolds
Mary K. Davis	Seema Mehta	Cindy Sandberg
Hilda Derres	Elaine Miller	Anisa Scholes
Lon Ellis	Sherrie Mortensen	James Schuster
VaLayne Finlayson	Mary Murdock	Lisa Seipert
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Rose Glad	Lanay Page	Carol Snowden
Jon Hancock	Linda Patrell-Kim	Claire Spencer
Trent Hendricks	Nykola Patton	Bonney Thom

Barbara Thorkildsen
Heather Trecker
Doyle Unsworth

Celia Vandenakker
Elizabeth Weight
Mary Winters

Pixie Wirth

KEARNS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to encourage support to acquiring the skills, knowledge, attributes, and values required to become productive, responsible citizens.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

We believe that...

- A safe and physically comfortable environment promotes student learning.
- Teachers, administrators, students, parents, and the community share responsibility for advancing our educational mission.
- Student need to not only demonstrate their understanding of essential knowledge and skills, but also need to be actively involved in solving problems and producing high quality work.
- Exceptional students (e.g. special education, limited English proficiency, gifted and talented etc.) require special services and resources.
- Student learning is the chief priority for the Kearns Junior High community.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Mont Widerberg, Alta High School, Jordan School District,
Visiting Team Chairperson

Shannon Hoskins, Sand Ridge Junior High School, Davis School District

Trisha Martinez, Syracuse Junior High School, Davis School District

Sandra Wilsey, Syracuse Junior High School, Davis School District

Peggy Mangum, Wendover High School, Tooele School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

KEARNS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Kearns Junior High School is a large suburban junior high located in Kearns, Utah serving students from seventh to ninth grade. The school's enrollment of 1,020 is an ethnically diverse student body. This creates many opportunities for students and many challenges for the school.

The community being serviced by Kearns Junior High is comprised primarily of individuals of low socioeconomic status, with more than half of the student body qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch. Kearns Junior High School has a moderate transiency rate of 10 percent. An active Parent-Teacher-Student Association and Community Council support Kearns Junior High. These organizations have been instrumental in the development of the School Trust Lands and School Improvement Plans.

Kearns Junior High has a School Improvement Plan that guides all decisions regarding student achievement. The diversity of the student body, including both ethnicity and economic factors, drives the School Improvement Plan and the school's commitment to create new and exciting learning opportunities for students. Programs aimed at enhancing social and life skills, as well as improving literacy and numeracy, are designed to meet the identified critical needs of Kearns Junior High.

Kearns Junior High School has been actively engaged in a collaborative self-study for the past two years. This process has provided the school with a more structured and focused process to address school improvement. The school's profile incorporates student achievement in the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT 9) data and Utah Core Criterion-Referenced Test (CRT) results. Additionally, a parent, teacher, and student opinion survey also served as a basis for the self-study.

a) *What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?*

Student achievement data indicates areas for study and action by the staff with regard to test scores. Eighth grade English students at Kearns Junior High School have scored well below the national norm of 50 percent on the Stanford Achievement Test for the past four years. Test scores declined in all subjects from 2000 to 2003. Total language, total reading, and total math scores were particularly low. This data has driven the school-wide commitment to improving literacy and numeracy skills.

Students at Kearns Junior High scored slightly below the district average on specific criterion-referenced tests for the past four years. Scores exhibited slight fluctuations in both directions; however, there were significant increases in more than one subject. Disaggregation of the data based on grade, gender, ethnicity, and income level will assist the school in identifying student populations that may be in need of additional support. There is a significant difference noted in the high percentage of seventh grade student who perform well on most criterion-referenced tests, compared to a decline in the percentage of eighth and ninth grade students who perform well on their tests. This data is the beginning of a school-wide commitment to have data-driven improvement plans based on a commitment to increasing the learning of **all** students.

b) What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?

Kearns Junior High School should continue its efforts to systematically collect and analyze pertinent student data to guide decisions made by the school. It is suggested the school collaborate with all stakeholders within the school community to use current and future data management systems to enhance this process. This effort should be extended to include data not currently in the profile. Attendance records, course grades, disciplinary referrals, GPAs, and other such data would provide additional information the staff could utilize in identifying student achievement gaps by subgroup and monitoring the effectiveness of the school improvement activities over time.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Kearns Junior High School recognizes their need to gather and analyze data, and collaboratively plan what improvement activities to do or undertake. As the school becomes more data-driven, it should extend the current practice to incorporating the collection and study of data in order to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of improvement activities over time. Special attention should be given to the monitoring of outcomes data, because the school will need to respond to the results.
- In an effort to identify specific student achievement targets, both the Utah State Core Tests and nationally normed test scores (SAT 9, etc.) should be disaggregated by content cluster and proficiency level (mastery, near mastery, partial mastery, minimal mastery) for each grade and/or class. The school is encouraged to identify students or groups of students requiring additional support or alternative instructional opportunities or programs.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

- a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

The Kearns Junior High School leadership team made an effort to engage various stakeholder groups in a collaborative self-study process. The school has been engaged in its self-study for the past two years. With a new administrative team leading the second year of the process, challenges were endless. The self-study has been the major focus of faculty meetings and staff development days. The Visiting Team recognizes that the school and leadership team made a sincere effort to do a thorough analysis of the school's strengths and limitations, and commends them for this effort.

- b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

Information presented in the school's self-study focused on the results of the student achievement data, student/parent/teacher surveys, and focus groups that were formed to address teacher/parent/staff concerns. A high level of collegiality, a passion for students, a willingness to engage in professional development activities, and student recognition programs are a few of the school's strengths that were not reported in the self-study, but that were apparent to the Visiting Team.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Kearns Junior High School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

1. Effective Communications
 - Students will integrate the use of a wide variety of communication forms and use a wide range of communication skills.
 - Students will clarify thoughts to ensure that ideas are understood.
 - Students will communicate clearly, purposefully, and comprehensively.
2. Responsible Citizenship
 - Students will demonstrate responsibility and ethically.
 - Students will respect themselves and others as well as understand and respect the diversity and interdependence of all people.
 - Students will act as responsible citizens of the community, state, nation, and world.

- Students will demonstrate a thorough understanding of the major global and environmental issues facing the world.
3. Life Long Learning
- Students will manage information and apply technology effectively.
 - Students will achieve high standards of both quantitative and qualitative literacy.
 - Students will initiate own learning.

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

- a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

The collaborative effort to build a shared vision for the school has been inclusive of all stakeholder groups within the school community. The School Community Council, students, and staff were given the opportunity to identify goals of the school and provide input. Stakeholders were involved in leadership roles and took an active role in the development of the mission, beliefs, and profile, as well as the determination of the DRSLs and action plan.

- b) *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

The school's beliefs reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to supporting individual student achievement and success.

- c) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

There is clear alignment among the school's mission, beliefs, and DRSLs. The school has begun to develop a comprehensive plan to articulate and integrate the DRSLs into curriculum and instruction.

Curriculum Development:

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

There is evidence that many departments either have aligned or are in the process of aligning themselves with the Utah State Core Curriculum and/or national standards. There is no written material that validates this alignment, but the

curriculum focus group assured the Visiting Team that an alignment does exist. It is important to have a written department curriculum that is research- and Core-based, has been arrived at through collaboration with the entire department, and is aligned with the DRSLs.

The essential knowledge and skills in most content areas are identified and are usually given priority in the development of the curriculum, but again, there is no written evidence to validate this assertion.

The Kearns Junior High School curriculum focus group assessed the quality level of classroom curricula through the use of an NSSE-based teacher survey, followed by a discussion with the staff and the curriculum focus group. The survey indicated that school-wide, departmental curriculums were based on established standards for student learning, and that teachers in every department were familiar with the state Core and the standards applicable to their subject.

There is some evidence to indicate collaboration on an informal basis. However, little formal evidence was provided to indicate that department members are working together to help students develop the essential knowledge and skills given priority by the identification “desired results for student learning,” the Utah State Core, and the Utah Skills booklet.

- b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

Kearns Junior High School has a hard-working staff with talented, dedicated teachers working with students. The teaching staff works together well and appears to like and respect each other. There is evidence of collaboration on an individual basis between teachers, and among members of “teams.” There is also evidence of a tremendous amount of effort expended to develop the DRSLs for the school. This was done cooperatively, with all the stakeholders involved in the discussion and decision.

The original intent of the DRSLs in the school improvement process was to provide a collective vision for student learning. All students within the school would be exposed to the same three learning results, and all teachers would teach the same three concepts in their classes. This collective vision would provide a unifying goal for curriculum and instruction that transcends individual courses and departments. A school’s DRSLs should also provide an avenue by which different content areas can work collaboratively to achieve these umbrella school goals.

At Kearns Junior High School, this school-wide vision appears to be missing. The collective effort of planning and collaboration among members of the same department is not evident. The departmental reports do list and discuss the

DRSLs, but do not discuss how the DRSLs will be implemented, what indicators will be used to measure learning, or how the department will know that the desired results for student learning have been reached. There is little evidence that there is common planning toward the school's DRSLs.

Quality Instructional Design:

- a) *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

During the visit the Visiting Team observed various instructional practices, including direct instruction, small group participation, some hands-on activities, group discussion, worksheet packets, assembly of portfolios, and note-taking. The Visiting Team observed that learning activities and instructional strategies seemed to be loosely connected. The Visiting Team suggests that the staff collaboratively research and implement multiple teaching strategies that align with the goals and standards for student learning.

Visiting Team members interviewed random students. Some indicated that limited supplies and space impeded their ability to complete their work. Others expressed that there were not a great many varied teaching strategies used in classrooms. A suggestion might be to explore alternative instructional approaches for student preparation for assigned tasks that will improve their engagement in their learning and their achievement.

- b) *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

During the observation time the Visiting Team did not note a wide variety of instructional strategies being used. Kearns Junior High indicated that the students are testing below average and that they struggle with having all the necessary skills and understanding to meet the diverse needs of all students. The school also indicated that data is reviewed annually, but little has been done to make changes in the programs. Teachers do welcome the inclusion of the special education students. Accommodations are made to meet the needs of these individual students as per their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). ESL students' needs are being addressed with alternative language program services according to their level of English proficiency. ESL students are also being helped in regular classes taught by teachers who have been trained in sheltered English teaching strategies. The Visiting Team would recommend that teachers use multiple instructional strategies within the class time and vary the strategies two or three times during the class period to meet the needs of different learners. Using disaggregated student data to adjust or modify instruction to remediate or improve student learning would benefit the students and student achievement.

- c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

Kearns Junior High has provided some opportunities for student learning support. There are computer labs and MESA opportunities to help students. Teachers volunteer regularly to work with students before and after school. Implementation of remediation classes for students who have failed a class would offer additional opportunities that enhance these students' educational opportunities. The staff is encouraged to investigate the effectiveness of any program in meeting student needs to see that all groups of students are able to take advantage of these support structures.

Quality Assessment Systems:

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

The Math Department was noted for multiple assessments, including monthly, quarterly, and term evaluations. The special education and ESL programs use curriculum-based assessments to determine mastery levels of students. Some classes are using pre and post assessments, but there does not seem to be a school-wide standard for articulated measurements. It may be helpful for the staff members to develop measurements and/or rubrics for the school's desired results for student learning.

The staff is encouraged to identify and develop assessments that are data-driven. Careful analysis and disaggregation of the data should be done once the data is collected.

- b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

It was noted that many teachers use specific curriculum-based assessment tools. There are many opportunities to collect data beyond the standardized tests discussed in the profile; however, that information was not provided. The creation of school-wide assessments may be helpful in providing further data. Clarifying the DRSLs with specific data and identifying specific, measurable benchmarks will help facilitate the development of school-wide assessments.

Conversations among parents, students, and teachers may provide insight as to who is not learning and why. By identifying the needs of the students, the staff and administration can strengthen their response to the individualized needs of students.

- c) *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

It was noted that federal mandates on participation of all students in standardized testing is an issue for Kearns Junior High. The staff shared frustration with this issue, and that the data collected by these standardized tests does not necessarily provide a true picture of student achievement.

The teachers were commended for their varied use of assessment tools. However, little evidence was provided that explained what other types of assessments have been used. There is a need to collaborate and discuss performance standards. The recommendations noted by the focus group are important. Departments need to create assessment programs that correlate to the State Core, and the results of these assessments should determine future responsibilities.

Leadership for School Improvement:

- a) *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

The leadership of Kearns Junior High School is new this year. All three counselors and the administrators are new to the school, creating a unique challenge for students, administrators, and parents alike. While recognizing that a great deal of work had been done previously to promote academic learning and support teachers, the new administration began an active process of in-service training for staff, as well as data-based decision making.

The school has worked to establish an academic learning climate. Teachers have been encouraged to team, collaborate with their peers, and use data to assess professional growth.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

The Granite School District has given its junior high schools instructions to adopt a middle school philosophy during the next couple of years. The data used by the district to make the decision has been shared with the school leadership.

On the school level, the leadership has begun the process of gathering data for the self-study process. They have developed a school survey based upon NSSE principles and concepts, and have partially based their efforts on research and collaboration. However, there are some weaknesses in the data collected and a need for additional data. For example, the data on incidents reported to the state is based upon a single year. Data should be collected over an extended period of time, at least three years, to provide a picture of what is occurring in the school.

There was no data in the self-study on tardiness, attendance, grade distribution, or the success of the average student.

The administration and staff have identified a number of critical issues which they have begun to work on, but there is no data to either support the need for change or to indicate that progress has been made.

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

As the instructional leader of the school, the Principal, Dr. Averett, monitors the data collected and available in annual test scores (CRTs and standardized tests). Therefore, the monitoring of student achievement is annual, and additional tools will be needed to successfully monitor student learning. The departments are beginning to play a role in monitoring student achievement, with pre and post tests within some departments. This is a good beginning, but an in-depth and comprehensive analysis of pertinent data and information must be conducted as a part of the analysis of student achievement. The school must thoroughly review assessments and evaluation data, and engage in continuous reflection to identify and develop appropriate interventions to improve student learning and to strengthen instructional effectiveness.

The Visiting Team has noted that the school leadership monitors achievement and instructional effectiveness, and plans in-service training based upon the results. This year, in-service programs have been developed on improving classroom management and on the middle school philosophy. There are a variety of instructional guides that would be effective in improving teacher instruction and student achievement. Best practices, “Effective Schools,” and a variety of teaching and reading strategies would all be suitable topics for in-service training.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

The school administration is working toward a skillful stewardship of Kearns Junior High School. Because the administration is new, it is difficult to see the effects after only eight months of leadership, but the consensus of teachers and students appears to be that this team has been successful in directing the management and organization of the school in a manner consistent with the school’s program goals and mission statement.

The administration is dedicated to a school where students feel safe, and one that provides an efficient and effective learning environment for students. The survey indicated that many of the students at school did not feel safe, but felt bullied by others. Based upon the data gathered in the survey, the school began the Peer

Leadership Team program, directed at bullying and other issues. It will be interesting to see the data gathered on its effectiveness.

- e) *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSs, and school improvement efforts?*

The allocation and use of resources are aligned with the school's goals. The administration has involved the Community Council and departments, and surveyed the faculty in an effort to make allocations that aid the goals of the school improvement plan.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

Positive and productive working relationships have been established among most of the students, teachers, support staff members, and administrators at Kearns Junior High School. The administration has been working toward building bridges to the school community. Monthly newsletters have been developed to keep the community informed about what is occurring in school, and to nurture a sense of caring and belonging within the community.

The Community Council has been active this year in the accreditation process. The number of participants is small, but growing. The school is building a community support base to encourage parents to be a part of the learning process.

Community Building:

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

Kearns Junior High has implemented a number of programs that create collaborative networking among school, community, and parents in order to help student learning. Programs used to reach out are Math and Science Night, SEOPs, guest speakers, PLT, PTSA, Hope for Tomorrow, and Community of Caring. The Visiting Team encourages the staff and administration to continue to work with parents and community members to promote this working relationship.

- b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

Positive and productive working relationships among most of Kearns Junior High's students, teachers, administration, and staff members were observed. Kearns Junior High has established the availability of e-mail and a website to

facilitate interaction among the various stakeholders. Student-related activities that move to promote the learning environment include the school musical, dance company performances, Music Department concerts, the sports program, the MESA Club, PTL, and Super Stars. School support is provided to the collaborative and interdependent teams that are working together to achieve school goals. The Visiting Team encourages the administration and staff to continue working with each other to expand these programs to enhance the learning environment.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

School employees are provided with 4½ contract days for professional development. The Kearns Junior High faculty received Structured Instruction Observation Protocol training from the Educational Equity Office of Granite School District, and ENVOY training for behavioral management. They also have time on Fridays (through an early-out program) to meet together in teams and departments for professional development. The Visiting Team recommends that the departments continue working together and reach out to other departments to incorporate and promote the desired results for student learning. The Visiting Team also recommends using research-based, data-driven professional development activities such as best practices.

- b) *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

Kearns Junior High has early morning labs for students. Professional development opportunities through Granite School District and the school administration are available for faculty and staff members. Friday is an early-out day to provide time for ongoing professional development, and teachers are provided with contract days to attend professional development activities.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

This chapter is not applicable to Kearns Junior High School. Most public junior high/middle schools are not accredited through the NAAS, but only by the USOE—it is their choice to join the NAAS or not.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

- a) *To what extent is the school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

The school's self-study has identified needs, and the current action plan addresses those needs. As the school continues its self-study, new or additional needs may be identified. In addition, as the school implements recommendations from the Visiting Team, adjustments to the action plan can be made when necessary.

- b) *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?*

There is a commitment at the school to self-improvement. However, the Visiting Team recognizes that not all stakeholders have a high level of commitment. It is recommended that the school's leadership use the recommendations of the Visiting Team as leverage to gain full support and commitment from all stakeholders.

- c) *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school-wide action plan appear to be?*

The course of action identified by the school administration supports the implementation and updating of the school improvement plan. In order to monitor school improvement efforts and evaluate their effectiveness, the leadership still needs to identify what data/evidence should be collected and periodically analyzed by the school leadership team. The school leadership should use the data as a guide for the school-wide action plan.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends the parents, staff, and administration for the conscious and diligent efforts made thus far in creating a culture and climate conducive to teaching and learning.
- The staff and administration are to be commended for their efforts thus far in identifying the needs of students and parents, and for their efforts to create a positive image in the community for Kearns Junior High School. School plans include:

- o Addressing student safety and drug prevention.
- o School goals to support students disadvantaged by the need to acquire English language skills.
- o Recognizing the need to address classroom behavior management.
- The Visiting Team commends the staff on its collaborative effort to develop the school's beliefs, mission statement, and desired results for student learning.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that Kearns Junior High continue to expand the school profile and the self-study by:
 - o Gathering additional data (i.e., attendance records, course grades, disciplinary referrals, and other such data).
 - o Disaggregating data even further (e.g., comparing test results to GPAs).
 - o Collecting and analyzing data pertaining to identified critical needs.
 - o Establishing baselines to be used to guide and compare against future data.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school collaboratively plan what improvement activities to do or undertake. As the school becomes more data-driven, it should extend current practice to incorporating the collection and study of data in order to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of improvement activities over time. Special attention should be given to the outcomes, because the school will need to act on the results. Plan, Do, Study, Act.
- The Visiting Team strongly recommends that a rubric for the school-wide desired results for student learning be developed. This rubric may in turn be used to analyze the effectiveness of the desired results for student learning over time. It is important that all stakeholders understand that Kearns Junior High School's desired results for student learning should be implemented school-wide, and are for all students.
- There is a need for collaborative engagement in inquiry regarding best practices in the areas of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The school needs to engage in ongoing dialogue and continuous improvement of individual skills and expertise on behalf of all students.

- The Visiting Team recommends, as Kearns Junior High makes the transition to the middle school philosophy, that the school:
 - Follow the “Collaborating for Student Success” model.
 - Allow this transition to research-based and data-driven.
 - Make the transition part of, and not separate from, the school improvement plan.
 - Make the process deliberate and methodical.